



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THREE INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED - TWO REMAIN FUGITIVES FOR ILLEGAL
TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE OF HAZARDOUS WASTE**

(El Paso, Texas) U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Texas, **Johnny Sutton**, announced today the unsealing of a seven count indictment by a federal grand jury and the arrests of **Roberto "Bobby" Loya**, 39, of El Paso, TX, **Ramon Martinez Altamirano**, 44, of El Paso, TX, and **Jesus Audelio Uribe Franco**, 45 of Ciudad Juarez. Defendants, **Raul Chavez Beltran** and **Victor Manuel Arroyo Balderas**, remain fugitives from justice.

According to the indictment, beginning in approximately 1995, Encon Environmental Services and its sole corporate directors, **Beltran** and **Franco**, engaged in a business relationship with **Loya** to import into the United States hazardous waste generated by companies located in and around Cd. Juarez. **Balderas**, was the Warehouse Coordinator for Encon and **Altamirano** was the Environmental Affairs Manager for Harper Mex. S.A. de C.V., located in Cd. Juarez. Harper Mex is a subsidiary of Harper-Wyman Company, one of the companies which contracted with Encon for the removal of toxic waste.

The indictment alleges neither Encon, nor its owners or employees possessed a permit to treat, store or dispose of hazardous waste under The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), a U.S. federal law designed to regulate the transportation and storage of hazardous waste. The defendants have been charged, with various offenses based on mischaracterization, unlawful transportation and unlawful storage of hazardous waste. By these actions, it is alleged defendant's deceived companies, whose waste they contracted to transport for disposal, into believing that the waste had been properly disposed of. The hazardous waste transported from Juarez and stored in El Paso by Encon and its associates is mercury contaminated soil.

"This case highlights the effectiveness of the Texas Environmental Enforcement Task Force. By pooling resources from state, federal and local agencies, we can more effectively combat unlawful practices. We will continue to use every resource to ensure that hazardous waste handlers do not profit from unlawful practices that threaten human health and the environment," said U.S. EPA Acting Regional Administrator Lawrence E. Starfield.

If convicted, each defendant faces between 10 and 22 years in federal prison. These indictments are the result of the investigative efforts of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Special Investigations Unit, and the Texas Environmental Enforcement Task Force.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

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